

Maine Child Health Survey—Kindergarten Southern Regional Report—2002

Bureau of Health, Maine Department of Health and Human Services

The Maine Child Health Survey (MCHS) provides an opportunity to gain critical information about the health and well-being of Maine's children.

The MCHS will be used as a basis for child health surveillance in Maine.

The MCHS is designed to answer three main questions.

1. What is the prevalence of the differing health conditions?
2. How are the differing health conditions distributed throughout the State?
3. What risk factors are associated with the differing health conditions measured?

Results or Findings:

- While the estimated rate of current asthma in the Southern Region (5.4%) is lower than the Statewide rate (8.4%), there is no real difference between the two rates.
- 17.5% of kindergartners in Southern Maine report wheezing/ respiratory symptoms with no diagnosed asthma.
- 12% of kindergartners in Southern Maine are considered to have a special health need (CSHN). This is similar to the Statewide rate of 15.4%.
- Almost 21% of kindergartners in the Southern Region are exposed to environmental tobacco smoke (ETS).
- 64% of kindergartners in Southern Maine are considered within the expected, or normal, weight for their age and gender. This is similar to kindergartners surveyed Statewide (61%).
- 2% of kindergartners in Southern Maine are underweight.
- 19% of kindergartners in Southern Maine are at risk for overweight. This is similar to the Statewide rate (21%).
- 15% of kindergartners in Southern Maine and Statewide are overweight.

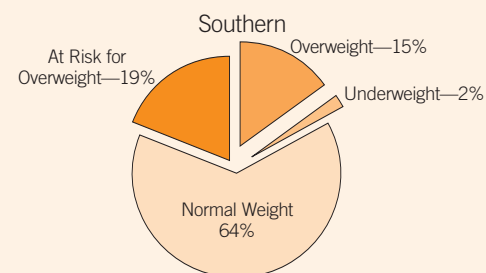
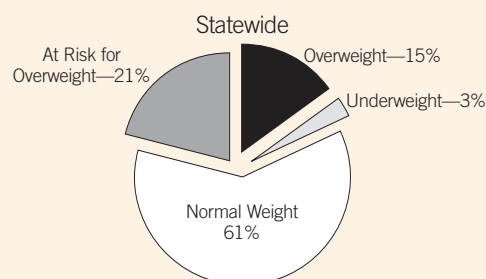
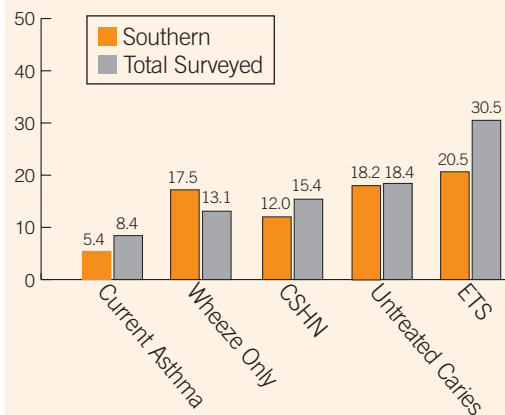


Table 1. Prevalence (95% Confidence Intervals) of health outcomes and risk factors among Southern Maine and Statewide kindergartners, 2002.

	Southern Region N = 273		Total Surveyed N = 913	
	% (#)	95% CI	% (#)	95% CI
Current Asthma	5.4 (17)	0 – 12.4	8.4 (73)	4.8 – 12.0
Lifetime Asthma	6.5 (22)	0 – 13.5	10.0 (96)	6.4 – 13.6
Wheeze Only	17.5 (28)	0.6 – 34.4	13.1 (89)	6.0 – 20.2
Children w/Special Health Needs	12.0 (33)	8.1 – 15.9	15.4 (140)	11.6 – 19.2
Untreated Caries	18.2 (40)	10.6 – 25.8	18.4 (176)	14.4 – 22.4
Environmental Tobacco Smoke Exposure	20.5 (66)	13.7 – 27.3	30.5 (309)	25.1 – 35.9

Note: The percent reported in Table 1 is the best estimate of the prevalence of each health condition among the kindergartners surveyed in Maine public schools. However, this percent is just an estimate. Confidence intervals are similar to “margins of error” in political polling.

Methods:

Maine currently collects data for elementary school children through the Maine Child Health Survey (MCHS). The data reported within this report refers to the first Statewide MCHS conducted with kindergartners in 2002. The MCHS is conducted in public schools at the kindergarten, third, and fifth grade levels every other year. Schools are randomly sampled within six geographic regions in Maine on a probability proportional to the enrollment in the school. All children in appropriate grades at the selected schools are invited to participate. The MCHS provides regional- and State-level estimates of multiple health outcomes through responses on questionnaires and physical measurements including height/weight and a dental screen.

Limitations:

A limitation of the first Statewide MCHS is the response rate. An overall response rate of 60% is the most widely accepted level for generalizing survey results to a population. Since our overall response Statewide for this survey was about 40%, we are limited in our ability to say with any real certainty that these results broadly reflect the kindergarten population in Maine. The Southern Region had a school participation rate of 67% and a student participation rate of 57.8% for an overall response rate of 38.7%, which is lower than the accepted level of 60%. Therefore, the results for the Southern Region reflect only those kindergartners surveyed.

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For more information on the Maine Child Health Survey or for a copy of the complete report, please contact:

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For a pdf copy of the full report: www.mainepublichealth.gov

